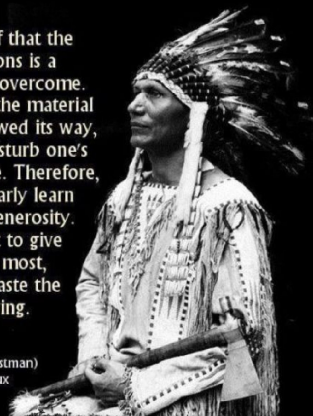


This history of Rain-In-the-Face is from the writings of **Charles Alexander Eastman** with additional notes and illustrations from various sources by the author Larry W Jones.

It was our belief that the love of possessions is a weakness to be overcome. Its appeal is to the material part, and if allowed its way, it will in time disturb one's spiritual balance. Therefore, children must early learn the beauty of generosity. They are taught to give what they prize most, that they may taste the happiness of giving.

—Ohiyera
(Charles Alexander Eastman)
Wahpeton Santee Sioux



Charles Alexander Eastman (born Hakadah and later named Ohiye S'a; February 19, 1858 – January 8, 1939) was a Santee Dakota physician educated at Boston University, writer, national lecturer, and reformer. In the early 20th century, he was "one of the most prolific authors and speakers on Sioux ethnohistory and American Indian affairs."

Eastman was of Santee Dakota, English and French ancestry. After working as a physician on reservations in South Dakota, he became increasingly active in issues on Native American rights. He is considered the first Native American author to write American history from the Native American point of view.

This is a biographical work.

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The noted Sioux warrior, Rain-in-the-Face, whose name once carried terror to every part of the frontier, died at his home on the Standing Rock reserve in North Dakota on September 14, 1905. About two months before his death I went to see him for



the last time, where he lay upon the bed of sickness from which he never rose again, and drew from him his life-history. It had been my experience that you cannot induce an Indian to tell a story, or even his own name, by asking him directly.

“Friend,” I said, “even if a man is on a hot trail, he stops for a smoke! In the good old days, before the charge there was a smoke. At home, by the fireside, when the old men were asked to tell their brave deeds, again the pipe was passed. So come, let us smoke now to the memory of the old days!”

He took of my tobacco and filled his long pipe, and we smoked. Then I told an old mirthful story to get him in the humor of relating his own history.

The old man lay upon an iron bedstead, covered by a red blanket, in a corner of the little log cabin. He was all alone that day; only an old dog lay silent and watchful at his master’s feet.

Finally he looked up and said with a pleasant smile:

“True, friend; it is the old custom to retrace one’s trail before leaving it forever! I know that I am at the door of the spirit home.

“I was born near the forks of the Cheyenne River, about seventy years ago. My father was not a chief; my grandfather was not a chief, but a good hunter and a feast-maker. On my mother’s side I had some noted ancestors, but they left me no chieftainship. I had to work for my reputation.

“When I was a boy, I loved to fight,” he continued. “In all our boyish games I had the name of being hard to handle, and I took much pride in the fact.

“I was about ten years old when we encountered a band of Cheyennes. They were on friendly terms with us, but we boys always indulged in sham fights on such occasions, and this time I got in an honest fight with a Cheyenne boy older than I. I got the best of the boy, but he hit me hard in the face several times, and my face was all spattered with blood and streaked where the paint had been washed away. The Sioux boys whooped and yelled:

“‘His enemy is down, and his face is spattered as if with rain! Rain-in-the-Face! His name shall be Rain-in-the-Face!’



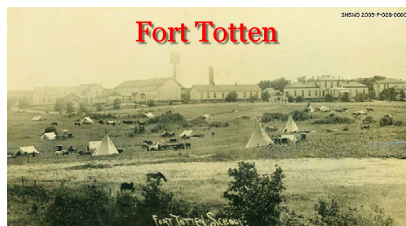
“Afterwards, when I was a young man, we went on a warpath against the Gros Ventres. We stole some of their horses, but were overtaken and had to abandon the horses and fight for our lives. I had wished my face to represent the sun when partly covered with darkness, so I painted it half black, half red. We fought all day in the rain, and my face was partly washed and streaked with red and black: so again I was christened Rain-in-

the-Face. We considered it an honorable name.

(Note) The tribal self-name means "White Clay People". The French used the term Gros Ventre, which was mistakenly interpreted from their sign language. They were once known as the Gros Ventres of the Prairies, while the Hidatsa people were once called the Gros Ventres of the Missouri.

The Piegan Blackfoot, enemies of the Gros Ventre throughout most of history, called the Aaniiih Piik-siik-sii-naa, which translates as "snakes". According to the Piegan Institute, the contemporary Piegan name for the Gros Ventre is Assinee, meaning "big bellies", which is similar to the falsely translated label applied by the French.

“I had been on many warpaths, but was not especially successful until about the time the Sioux began to fight with the white man. One of the most daring attacks that we ever made was at Fort Totten, North Dakota, in the summer of 1866.



(Note) *Fort Totten State Historic Site is a fort built after the American Civil War by the United States Army to protect European-American settlers in the area. It was also used as the site of the Devil's Lake Indian Agency (the original name of the reservation). Later the fort was adapted for use as an Indian boarding school, one of several run by the federal government via the Bureau of Indian Affairs.*

“Hohay, the Assiniboiné captive of Sitting Bull, was the leader in this raid. Wapaypay, the Fearless Bear, who was afterward hanged at Yankton, was the bravest man among us. He dared Hohay to make the charge. Hohay accepted the challenge, and in turn dared the other to ride with him through the agency and right under the walls of the fort, which was well garrisoned and strong.

(Note) *Assiniboiné (Native American) captive and warrior leader of the Lakota Sioux Jumping Bull was an Assiniboiné boy, captured by Sitting Bull during a battle. Sitting Bull adopted the child as his brother (thereby saving his life) and named him Hohay (Jumping Bull). Hohay became devoted to Sitting Bull and when he retired from warfare, Jumping Bull took his place as war leader.*

“Wapaypay and I in those days called each other ‘brother-friend.’ It was a life-and-death vow. What one does the other must do; and that meant that I must be in the forefront of the charge, and if he is killed, I must fight until I die also!

“I prepared for death. I painted as usual like an eclipse of the sun, half black and half red.”

His eyes gleamed and his face lighted up remarkably as he talked, pushing his black hair back from his forehead with a nervous gesture.

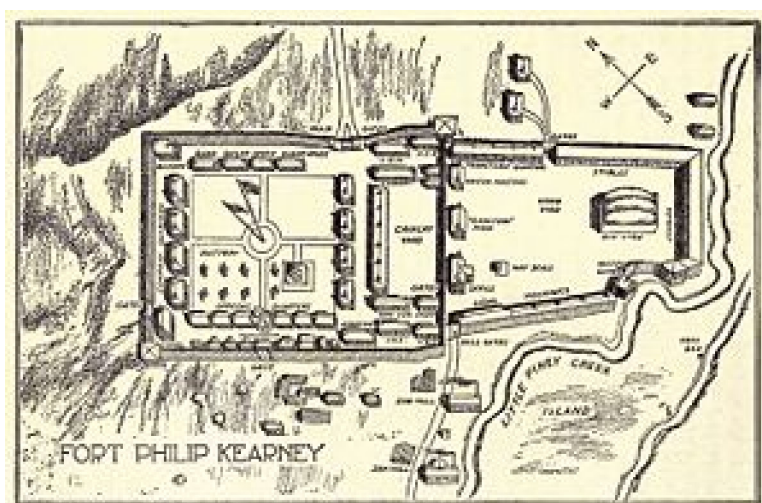
“Now the signal for the charge was given! I started even with Wapaypay, but his horse was faster than mine, so he left me a little behind as we neared the fort. This was bad for me, for by that time the soldiers had somewhat recovered from the surprise and were aiming better.

“Their big gun talked very loud, but my Wapaypay was leading on, leaning forward on his fleet pony like a flying squirrel on a smooth log! He held his rawhide shield on the right side, a little to the front, and so did I. Our warwhoop was like the coyotes singing in the evening, when they smell blood!

“The soldiers’ guns talked fast, but few were hurt. Their big gun was like a toothless old dog, who only makes himself hotter the more noise he makes,” he remarked with some humor.

“How much harm we did I do not know, but we made things lively for a time; and the white men acted as people do when a swarm of angry bees get into camp. We made a successful retreat, but some of the reservation Indians followed us yelling, until Hohay told them that he did not wish to fight with the captives of the white man, for there would be no honor in that. There was blood running down my leg, and I found that both my horse and I were slightly wounded.

“Some two years later we attacked a fort west of the Black Hills [Fort Phil Kearny, Wyoming]. It was there we killed one hundred soldiers.” [The military reports say eighty men, under the command of Captain Fetterman – not one left alive to tell the tale!] “Nearly every band of the Sioux nation was represented in that fight – Red Cloud, Spotted Tail, Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Big Foot, and all our great chiefs were there.



(Note) *Fort Phil Kearny was an outpost of the United States Army that existed in the late 1860s in present-day northeastern Wyoming along the Bozeman Trail. The post was named for Maj. Gen. Philip Kearny, a popular figure in the American Civil War. The fort should be distinguished from the similarly named Fort Kearny in Nebraska, which was named for Kearny's uncle Stephen W. Kearny.*

Today, the fort and the nearby Fetterman and Wagon Box battle sites are maintained by the State of Wyoming as the Fort Phil Kearny State Historic Site.

The tragic events associated with Fort Phil Kearny, the Fetterman Massacre, and the Wagon Box Fight form one of the most dramatic chapters in the history of the Indian Wars. For two bloody years from 1866 to 1868, the Sioux Indians, bitter and opposing the invasion of their hunting grounds by prospectors bound over the Bozeman Trail to the Montana goldfields, fought back viciously. It was one of the few instances during the Indian Wars when the Army was forced to abandon a region it had occupied when the Sioux triumphed and the forts were evacuated. But the conflict foreshadowed the final disastrous confrontation between frontiersman and Indian that ensued on the northern Plains as the westward movement accelerated after the Civil War.

Of course such men as I were then comparatively unknown. However, there were many noted young warriors, among them Sword, the younger Young-Man-Afraid, American Horse [afterward chief], Crow King, and others.

“This was the plan decided upon after many councils. The main war party lay in ambush, and a few of the bravest young men were appointed to attack the woodchoppers who were cutting logs to complete the building of the fort. We were told not to kill these men, but to chase them into the fort and retreat slowly, defying the white men; and if the soldiers should follow, we were to lead them into the ambush.

They took our bait exactly as we had hoped! It was a matter of a very few minutes, for every soldier lay dead in a shorter time than it takes to annihilate a small herd of buffalo.



“This attack was hastened because most of the Sioux on the Missouri River and eastward had begun to talk of suing for peace. But even this did not stop the peace movement. The very next year a treaty was signed at Fort Rice, Dakota Territory, by nearly all the Sioux

chiefs, in which it was agreed on the part of the Great Father in Washington that all the country north of the Republican River in Nebraska, including the Black Hills and the Big Horn Mountains, was to be always Sioux country, and no white man should intrude upon it without our permission.

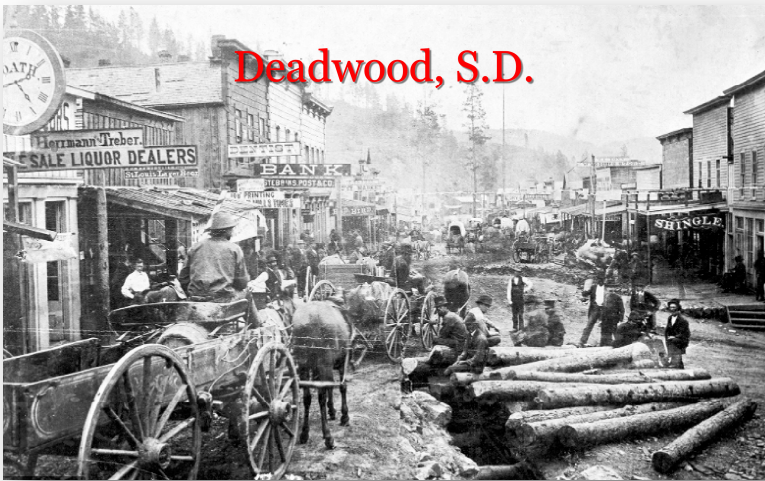
(Note) Fort Rice was a frontier military fort in the 19th century named for American Civil War General James Clay Rice in what was then Dakota Territory and what is now North Dakota. Despite the protests of its location, Fort Rice sometimes served as a connecting point between the people of the United States and Sioux Nation. Meetings were held and treaties were signed on its premises.

Though tensions remained high for the entire duration of the fort's usage, it served as an invaluable outpost in the frontier for the US government. Expeditions were led from the fort for exploratory purposes, and having a military presence nearby meant that travelers, railway surveyors, and workmen were safe from ambushes from indigenous peoples and wildlife.

A Lakota warrior known as Rain-in-the-Face killed two civilians accompanying an exploratory mission of Yellowstone departing from Fort Rice in 1873. These murders brought about the anger of Tom and George Custer—the latter being the well known General Custer, famous for his battles against indigenous peoples in the American frontier.

Even with this agreement Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were not satisfied, and they would not sign.

“Up to this time I had fought in some important battles, but



had achieved no great deed. I was ambitious to make a name for myself. I joined war parties against the Crows, Mandans, Gros Ventres, and Pawnees, and gained some little distinction. “It was when the white men found the yellow metal in our country, and came in great numbers, driving away our game, that we took up arms against them for the last time.

I must say here that the chiefs who were loudest for war were among the first to submit and accept reservation life. Spotted Tail was a great warrior, yet he was one of the first to yield, because he was promised by the Chief Soldiers that they would

make him chief of all the Sioux. Ugh! he would have stayed with Sitting Bull to the last had it not been for his ambition. "About this time we young warriors began to watch the trails of the white men into the Black Hills, and when we saw a wagon coming we would hide at the crossing and kill them all without much trouble.

We did this to discourage the whites from coming into our country without our permission. It was the duty of our Great Father at Washington, by the agreement of 1868, to keep his white children away.



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**CHIEF SPOTTED TAIL AND WIFE
(WAR SHIRT PURCHASE EDITION)**

(Note) *Destined for greatness and an early death, Spotted Tail, the great chief of the Brulé Sioux, was born in 1823 on the White River in South Dakota. His sister was the mother of Crazy Horse, and he was a first cousin to Conquering Bear, the man named by the U.S. government as the chief of the tribe at Fort Laramie in 1851. Spotted Tail was not a hereditary chief but received recognition based on his ability and character.*

In 1942 his grandson, Stephen, told the story of how he got this unusual name: 'In early days he was hunting...along some River and he met some white men trappers. One of this man was skinning a raccoon and this man showed him the coon's tail which had black rings around the tail and he named him after this and called him 'Spotted Tail.' The warrior incorporated the trophy into his war headdress, wearing it in his first battles. Spotted Tail showed martial prowess as a teenager. By the time he was 30, he was an honored Shirtwearer, his war garment decorated with more than 100 locks of hair from enemy scalps.

"During the troublesome time after this treaty, which no one seemed to respect, either white or Indian [but the whites broke it first], I was like many other young men – much on the warpath, but with little honor. I had not yet become noted for any great deed. Finally, Wapaypay and I waylaid and killed a white soldier on his way from the fort to his home in the east.

"There were a few Indians who were liars, and never on the warpath, playing 'good Indian' with the Indian agents and the war chiefs at the forts. Some of this faithless set betrayed me, and told more than I ever did. I was seized and taken to the fort near Bismarck, North Dakota [Fort Abraham Lincoln], by a brother [Tom Custer] of the Long-Haired War Chief, and

imprisoned there. These same lying Indians, who were selling their services as scouts to the white man, told me that I was to be shot to death, or else hanged upon a tree. I answered that I was not afraid to die.

“However, there was an old soldier who used to bring my food and stand guard over me – he was a white man, it is true, but he had an Indian heart! He came to me one day and unfastened the iron chain and ball with which they had locked my leg, saying by signs and what little Sioux he could muster: “Go, friend! take the chain and ball with you. I shall shoot, but the voice of the gun will lie.’

“When he had made me understand, you may guess that I ran my best! I was almost over the bank when he fired his piece at me several times, but I had already gained cover and was safe.

I have never told this before, and would not, lest it should do him an injury, but he was an old man then, and I am sure he must be dead long since. That old soldier taught me that some of the white people have hearts,” he added, quite seriously.

“I went back to Standing Rock in the night, and I had to hide for several days in the woods, where food was brought to me by my relatives. The Indian police were ordered to retake me, and they pretended to hunt for me, but really they did not, for if they had found me I would have died with one or two of them, and they knew it!



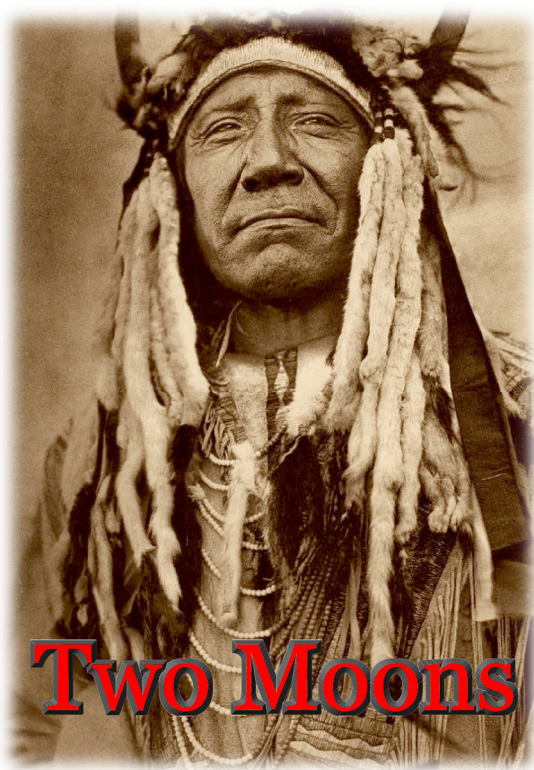
In a few days I departed with several others, and we rejoined the hostile camp on the Powder River and made some trouble for the men who were building the great iron track north of us [Northern Pacific].



“In the spring the hostile Sioux got together again upon the Tongue River. It was one of the greatest camps of the Sioux that I ever saw. There were some Northern Cheyennes with us, under Two Moon, and a few Santee Sioux, renegades from Canada, under Inkpaduta, who had killed white people in Iowa long before. We had decided to fight the white soldiers until no warrior should be left.”

(Note) Perhaps known best for his participation in battles such as the Battle of the Rosebud against General Crook on June 17, 1876, in the Montana Territory, the Battle of Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876 and what would prove to be his last battle, the Battle of Wolf Mountain on January 8, 1877. Two Moons' defeat at Wolf Mountain by General Nelson A. Miles led inevitably to the surrender of his Cheyenne band to Miles at Fort Keogh in April 1877.

Two Moons traveled on multiple occasions to Washington, D.C., to discuss and fight for the future of the Northern Cheyenne people and to better the conditions that existed on the reservation. In 1914, Two Moons met with President Woodrow Wilson to discuss these matters. Two Moons was one of the models selected for James Fraser's famous Buffalo Nickel.



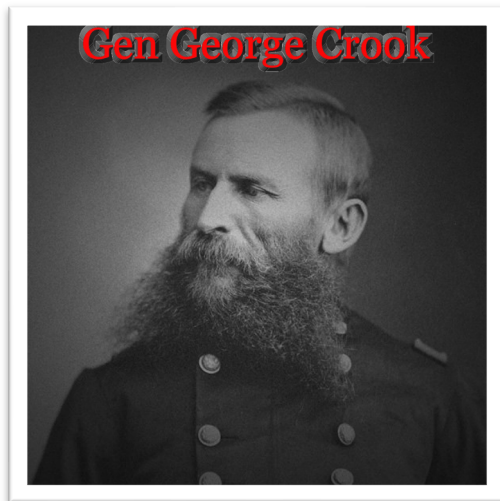
Two Moons

At this point Rain-in-the-Face took up his tobacco pouch and began again to fill his pipe.

“Of course the younger warriors were delighted with the prospect of a great fight! Our scouts had discovered piles of oats for horses and other supplies near the Missouri River. They had been brought by the white man’s fire-boats. Presently they reported a great army about a day’s travel to the south, with Shoshone and Crow scouts.

“There was excitement among the people, and a great council was held. Many spoke. I was asked the condition of those Indians who had gone upon the reservation, and I told them truly that they were nothing more than prisoners.

It was decided to go out and meet Three Stars [General Crook] at a safe distance from our camp.



“We met him on the Little Rosebud. I believe that if we had waited and allowed him to make the attack, he would have fared no better than Custer. He was too strongly fortified where he was, and I think, too, that he was saved partly by his Indian allies, for the scouts discovered us first and fought us first, thus giving him time to make his preparations. I think he was more wise than brave! After we had left that neighborhood he might have pushed on and connected with the Long-Haired Chief. That would have saved Custer and perhaps won the day.

“When we crossed from Tongue River to the Little Big Horn, on account of the scarcity of game, we did not anticipate any more trouble. Our runners had discovered that Crook had retraced his trail to Goose Creek, and we did not suppose that the white men would care to follow us farther into the rough country.

“Suddenly the Long-Haired Chief appeared with his men! It was a surprise.”

“What part of the camp were you in when the soldiers attacked the lower end?” I asked.

“I had been invited to a feast at one of the young men’s lodges [a sort of club]. There was a certain warrior who was making preparations to go against the Crows, and I had decided to go also,” he said.

“While I was eating my meat we heard the war cry! We all rushed out, and saw a warrior riding at top speed from the lower camp, giving the warning as he came.

Then we heard the reports of the soldiers’ guns, which sounded differently from the guns fired by our people in battle.

“I ran to my teepee and seized my gun, a bow, and a quiver full of arrows. I already had my stone war club, for you know we usually carry those by way of ornament.



Just as I was about to set out to meet Reno, a body of soldiers appeared nearly opposite us, at the edge of a long line of cliffs across the river.

“All of us who were mounted and ready immediately started down the stream toward the ford. There were Ogallalas, Minneconjous, Cheyennes, and some Unkpapas, and those around me seemed to be nearly all very young men.

“Behold, there is among us a young woman!’ I shouted. ‘Let no young man hide behind her garment!’ I knew that would make those young men brave.

“The woman was Tashenamani, or Moving Robe, whose brother had just been killed in the fight with Three Stars. Holding her brother’s war staff over her head, and leaning forward upon her charger, she looked as pretty as a bird. Always when there is



a woman in the charge, it causes the warriors to vie with one another in displaying their valor,” he added.

“The foremost warriors had almost surrounded the white men, and more were continually crossing the stream. The soldiers had dismounted, and were firing into the camp from the top of the cliff.”

“My friend, was Sitting Bull in this fight?” I inquired.

“I did not see him there, but I learned afterward that he was among those who met Reno, and that was three or four of the white man’s miles from Custer’s position. Later he joined the attack upon Custer, but was not among the foremost.

“When the troops were surrounded on two sides, with the river on the third, the order came to charge! There were many very young men, some of whom had only a war staff or a stone war club in hand, who plunged into the column, knocking the men over and stampeding their horses.

“The soldiers had mounted and started back, but when the onset came they dismounted again and separated into several divisions, facing different ways. They fired as fast as they could load their guns, while we used chiefly arrows and war clubs. There seemed to be two distinct movements among the Indians. One body moved continually in a circle, while the other rode directly into and through the troops.

“Presently some of the soldiers remounted and fled along the ridge toward Reno’s position; but they were followed by our warriors, like hundreds of blackbirds after a hawk. A larger body remained together at the upper end of a little ravine, and fought bravely until they were cut to pieces. I had always thought that white men were cowards, but I had a great respect for them after this day.

“It is generally said that a young man with nothing but a war staff in his hand broke through the column and knocked down the leader very early in the fight. We supposed him to be the leader, because he stood up in full view, swinging his big knife [sword] over his head, and talking loud. Some one unknown afterwards shot the chief, and he was probably killed also; for

if not, he would have told of the deed, and called others to witness it. So it is that no one knows who killed the Long-Haired Chief [General Custer].





“After the first rush was over, coups were counted as usual on the bodies of the slain. You know four coups [or blows] can be counted on the

body of an enemy, and whoever counts the first one [touches it for the first time] is entitled to the 'first feather.'

(Note) Counting coup could be with a hand, any part of the body, or with an object. The most prestigious act was to touch or strike an enemy warrior, leave him alive, then escaping unharmed. Touching the first enemy to die in battle or touching the enemy's defensive works also counted as coup. Counting coup could also involve stealing an enemy's weapons or horses tied up to his lodge in camp. Risk of injury or death was required to count coup. After a battle or exploit, the people of a tribe would gather together to recount their acts of bravery and "count coup." Coups were recorded in some tribes by putting notches (cut marks) in a coup stick. A coup stick was often a willow rod with a feather on the end. But coup could be counted with any object.

“There was an Indian here called Appearing Elk, who died a short time ago. He was slightly wounded in the charge. He had some of the weapons of the Long-Haired Chief, and the Indians used to say jokingly after we came upon the reservation that Appearing Elk must have killed the Chief, because he had his sword! However, the scramble for plunder did not begin until all were dead. I do not think he killed Custer, and if he had, the time to claim the honor was immediately after the fight.

“Many lies have been told of me. Some say that I killed the Chief, and others that I cut out the heart of his brother [Tom Custer], because he had caused me to be imprisoned. Why, in that fight the excitement was so great that we scarcely recognized our nearest friends! Everything was done like lightning. After the battle we young men were chasing horses all over the prairie, while the old men and women plundered the bodies; and if any mutilating was done, it was by the old men.

“I have lived peaceably ever since we came upon the reservation. No one can say that Rain-in-the-Face has broken the rules of the Great Father. I fought for my people and my country. When we were conquered I remained silent, as a warrior should. Rain-in-the-Face was killed when he put down his weapons before the Great Father. His spirit was gone then; only his poor body lived on, but now it is almost ready to lie down for the last time. Ho, hechetu! [It is well.]”

End of account by Charles Alexander Eastman



**Rain-in-the-Face and wife Sati
Their wedding day, 1889**

About the Author

Larry W Jones is a songwriter, having penned over 7,700 song lyrics. Published in 22 volumes of island themed, country, cowboy, western and bluegrass songs. The entire assemblage is the world's largest collection of lyrics written by an individual songwriter.

As a wrangler on the "Great American Horse Drive", at age 68, he assisted in driving 800 half-wild horses 62 miles in two days, from Winter pasture grounds in far NW Colorado to the Big Gulch Ranch outside of Craig Colorado.

His book, "The Oldest Greenhorn", chronicles the adventures and perils in earning the "Gate-to-Gate" trophy belt buckle the hard way.

Other short story books include:

A Squirrel Named Julie and The Fox Ridge Fox

The Painting Of A Dream

The Boy With Green Thumbs and The Wild Tree Man

Red Cloud – Chief Of the Sioux

Spotted Tail – The Orphan Negotiator

Little Crow – The Fur Trapper's Patron

Chief Gall – The Strategist

Crazy Horse – The Vision Quest Warrior

Sitting Bull - The Powder River Power

Up and Over – A Hike In The Rockies

All his publications are available on [Lulu.com](https://www.lulu.com).

